

PRESS RELEASE

State Agricultural Officials Announce 10,000 Dogs and Cats Helped Through Massachusetts Animal Fund

**Residents Encouraged to Donate to the Massachusetts Animal Fund on
Income Tax Returns**

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

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BOSTON — Today, the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) announced that the Massachusetts Animal Fund's Voucher Program has helped spay, neuter, or vaccinate 10,000 cats and dogs since the Fund's inception in 2014. With tax season underway, MDAR is encouraging Massachusetts taxpayers to assist the Fund's efforts to help animals in need and end animal homelessness by donating to the Massachusetts Animal Fund on Line 33f of their income tax returns.

"The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to celebrate that through the help of voluntary donations by Massachusetts taxpayers, the Massachusetts Animal Fund has been able help so many animals in need within its first five years," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "The Voucher Program is a great example of how a strong partnership between state and municipal agencies can make an impact in animal welfare. We encourage Massachusetts taxpayers to continue to help vulnerable cats and dogs by donating to the Massachusetts Animal Fund."

The Mass Animal Fund's Voucher Program was created in July of 2014 as a mechanism to provide assistance to Massachusetts' most vulnerable companion animals. The Voucher Program is dedicated to bringing resources to homeless animals and animals owned by low-income Massachusetts residents. Obstacles such as poverty, insufficient funding, transportation, and lack of accessible veterinary care often prevent sterilization and vaccinations in these at-risk populations. Through the Fund's large collaborative network of municipal animal control officers and 37 local veterinary providers over 13,000 vouchers have already been distributed across the Commonwealth to reach these animals.

The sterilization and vaccinating of animals benefits the overall animal health of a community by decreasing the number of homeless and feral animals born each year, decreasing unwanted behaviors in animals like roaming and aggression, which often lead to the surrender and euthanasia of animals, reducing the occurrence of reproductive diseases and providing protection against disease outbreak.

"We want to thank the Massachusetts taxpayers who donate to our mission of preventing animal homelessness in the Commonwealth," **said Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux**. "We ask taxpayers to once again write in a donation to allow us to help thousands more in 2019."

Since inception, the Mass Animal Fund has spent over \$1.1 million dollars to sterilize and vaccinate animals in over 300 Massachusetts municipalities. The Voucher Program turns donations into a resource that local animal control officers can utilize to get assistance for animals their community. The Mass Animal Fund also provides free training opportunities and support to Massachusetts ACOs so they can provide uniform enforcement of animal control laws.

Taxpayers can contribute to the Mass Animal Fund by donating on Line 33f of the 2018 state income tax return, or directly at <http://massanimalfund.com/donate> (<http://massanimalfund.com/donate>). Follow the Fund on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/massanimalfund) (<http://www.facebook.com/massanimalfund>) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/Line33f) (<https://twitter.com/Line33f>) for the most up-to-date information about ending animal homelessness in the Commonwealth.

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

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